

only ship to get underway during the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor. After receiving one torpedo hit and several bomb hits, the USS *Nevada* had to be beached, but after vigorous salvage work, repairs and improvements, she was able to return to combat. Highly decorated for the numerous battles that she was a part of, the USS *Nevada* was present at the Attu landings against the Japanese, fired against German defenses during the Normandy landings, and supported operations in Iwo Jima and Okinawa. After over 30 years of service, the USS *Nevada* was deemed too old for retention and was assigned to serve as a target in the atomic bomb tests at Bikini Atoll. The experience left her radioactive and badly damaged, leading to her being decommissioned and eventually sunk during naval gunfire practice.

It is an honor to be able to commemorate this day on behalf of my fellow Nevadans as we remember those who have risked their lives to defend freedom. Our Navy's commitment to this country, as well as their dedication to their families and communities, exemplified why the legacy of all veterans must be preserved for generations to come. These heroes selflessly served not for recognition, but because it was the right thing to do. As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I recognize that Congress has a responsibility not only to honor these brave individuals, but to ensure they are cared for after their return home. I remain committed to upholding this promise for our veterans and servicemembers in Nevada and throughout the Nation.

I ask that we recognize the commissioning of the USS *Nevada* and honor all that sailed aboard her. I am both humbled and honored to commemorate the brave men and women who dedicated their lives to serving our country and recognize them here today. May we never forget the legacy of this great battleship and her gallant crew.●

#### REMEMBERING MATTIE STEPANEK

● Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I wish to pay tribute to the life of Matthew Joseph Thaddeus Stepanek, best known as Mattie, who passed away 10 years ago at the age of 13 from complications due to his rare form of muscular dystrophy. Though his death was a tragedy, his life was a triumph. He was a gifted author and noted peacemaker. He took a personal challenge and turned it into a tool of inspiration for all of us. Mattie once said, "I want my message to live beyond me," and it does. His message of peace and hope has reached millions around the world.

When Mattie was born in 1990 in Upper Marlboro, MD, doctors did not expect him to live longer than 24 hours. Mattie suffered from the same rare form of muscular dystrophy as his mother, his two brothers, and sister. His siblings all died before the age of 4. Though the disease eventually ren-

dered him unable to walk and breathe on his own, Mattie was a survivor. He began writing poetry at the age of 3. He wrote poems about hope and peace. His philosophy was, "Remember to play after every storm," and he did.

Mattie believed that wishes can come true. He had three. The first was to talk peace with Jimmy Carter. They spoke several times through email correspondence. His second was to have his poems published in a book. He wrote the most successful volumes of poetry in the last 30 years and became a seven-time New York Times best-selling author. His last was to see his poetry read on Oprah. He appeared on Oprah's show several times and became her good friend.

In September 2001, Mattie faced a setback. He was so sick that his doctors warned a laugh could cause his damaged windpipe to collapse. But that did not stop Mattie from a spectacular recovery. His doctors could not explain his comeback from this brush with death, but Mattie knew what it was. It was hope, prayer, and just one in a series of miracles in a miraculous life.

After the chaos and confusion of September 11 and the anthrax attacks on the Capitol, I was very grief stricken. I saw a little boy on TV reading poetry, offering hope and healing. Mattie comforted me and lifted my spirits. I contacted him through his hospital and visited with him and his mother in his home. In 2002, I presented Mattie with the Children's Hope Medal of Honor. This medal is given to young heroes who have shown valiant effort and courage in facing life's daily challenges. No one was more deserving of that medal than Mattie Stepanek.

Today we must also remember Mattie's mother Jeni Stepanek. Like Mattie, she suffers physical challenges, but her heart, mind, and spirit remain strong. Without Jeni, Mattie would never have been able to share his beautiful, inspiring words with us. Mattie got his knack for public speaking from his mom. She writes and talks about children with disabilities. He also got his love of life from her. Jeni continues to inspire us all with her life, with Mattie's words, and most importantly, a message of peace and hope.

In his poem entitled "The Daily Gift," Mattie wrote:

You know what?  
Tomorrow is a new day.  
And today is a new day.  
Actually, every day is a new day.  
Thank you, God,  
For all of these special and new days.

This is how Mattie Stepanek lived his life—with appreciation, inspiration, and energy. That is why I wish to say: Thank you, God, for blessing us with the gift of Mattie Stepanek and his heart of songs.●

#### MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

#### EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

#### MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 1:23 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 5016. An act making appropriations for financial services and general government for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes.

At 3:03 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 108. Concurrent resolution providing for the correction of the enrollment of H.R. 5021.

#### MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 5016. An act making appropriations for financial services and general government for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Appropriations.

#### MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 2631. A bill to prevent the expansion of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program unlawfully created by Executive memorandum on August 15, 2012.

#### REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. DURBIN, from the Committee on Appropriations, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

H.R. 4870. A bill making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 113-211).

By Mr. LEAHY, from the Committee on the Judiciary:

Report to accompany S. 517, a bill to promote consumer choice and wireless competition by permitting consumers to unlock mobile wireless devices, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 113-212).

By Mr. LEAHY, from the Committee on the Judiciary, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S.J. Res. 19. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relating to contributions and expenditures intended to affect elections.